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Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Report on the thirteenth session (7-11 April 2014)

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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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Summary

The present report contains the summary and the recommendations adopted at the thirteenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, held at United Nations Headquarters from 7 to 11 April 2014. The Committee, which was established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45, consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity for a four-year period.

[23 April 2014]

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Chapter I

Draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

1. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its thirteenth session

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2012/28 of 27 July 2012, 2013/23 of 24 July 2013 and other related resolutions on public administration and development,

Referring to General Assembly resolution 59/55 of 2 December 2004 concerning the contribution of the *World Public Sector Report* to policymakers responsible for public administration, and resolutions 67/195 of 21 December 2012, 68/198 of 20 December 2013 and other related resolutions on information and communications technologies for development,

Referring also to General Assembly resolution 66/209 of 22 December 2011 on promoting the efficiency, accountability, effectiveness and transparency of public administration by strengthening supreme audit institutions,

Recalling the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled "The future we want",[1] and recognizing that effective governance at the local, subnational, national, regional and global levels representing the voices and interests of all is critical for advancing sustainable development,

Referring to General Assembly resolution 68/1 of 20 September 2013 on the review of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 61/16 on the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council, in which it is stipulated that the Economic and Social Council shall invite, inter alia, its subsidiary bodies to contribute, as appropriate, to its work in keeping with the agreed annual theme,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 49/136 of 19 December 1994 and 50/225 of 19 April 1996, and Economic and Social Council resolution 2001/45 of 20 December 2001, concerning the mandate and methods of work of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration,

Recognizing the support being provided by the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance to countries on public governance and public administration,

Recognizing also the key role of information and communications technologies and e-government in providing effective platforms to facilitate public service delivery, citizen engagement, knowledge-sharing, transfer of innovative solutions and capacity-building for sustainable development among countries,

[1] General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

Taking note of the successful meetings of the Internet Governance Forum as a forum for multi-stakeholder dialogue on various matters as reflected in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society concerning public policy issues related to the Internet,

Underlining the centrality of transparent, accountable, efficient, effective, citizen-oriented, professional and ethical public administration to the successful implementation of national development policies and the management of development programmes,

Recognizing the work of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration in providing policy advice and programmatic guidance to the Economic and Social Council on issues related to governance and public administration in development,

Noting the acceleration of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda and the relevance of the Committee's work in this respect,

1. *Requests* the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to consider emerging issues in public administration related to the annual main themes and the integration segments of the Economic and Social Council, at the fourteenth and fifteenth sessions of the Committee, in 2015 and 2016 respectively, and to fully support the elaboration of sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda;

2. *Invites* the Committee to enhance its interaction and coordination with the Council and other subsidiary bodies of the Council with a view to addressing cross-cutting areas through established working methods of the Council;

3. *Takes note* of the conclusions of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, contained in the report on its thirteenth session, on transforming public administration for sustainable development;

4. *Underlines* that service to citizens should be at the centre of transforming public administration, requiring appropriate institutional frameworks, professional and ethical leadership, a focus on diversity and gender equality, harnessing information and communications technology, innovation, responsibility, and public sector capacity-building;

5. *Notes* that political and administrative leadership at all levels is essential to inspire, engage and motivate public servants to achieve the highest quality of performance;

6. *Reaffirms* that the foundations for sustainable development at all levels include transparent, participatory and accountable governance and a professional, ethical, responsive and information and communications technology-enabled public administration;

7. *Also reaffirms* that good governance and the rule of law at the national and international levels are essential for sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, sustainable development and the eradication of poverty and hunger,[2] and

[2] General Assembly resolution 65/1, para. 11; other clauses related to citizen engagement may be found in paras. 23 (a), (e) and (g) of the resolution.

stresses the important role of government in achieving sustainable development and building stable, peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies;

8. *Further reaffirms* the need for the effective use of information and communications technologies in designing, planning, delivering and monitoring public services that are responsive to international, national and local needs and priorities;[3]

9. *Stresses* that there exists an international policy vacuum in relation to cyber-security that has been filled by illegal, illicit and unethical activities, and that therefore there is now the urgent need to formulate an international policy framework because national efforts in this area could not succeed without international consensus and support;

10. *Recognizes* that the transformation of public administration for the support of sustainable development calls for capable government at the national and local levels, and urges Member States to ensure that effective means of implementation are enabled by focusing on key goals and that appropriate capabilities are in place for identifying and addressing governance risks at an optimal level in implementing solutions to public policy concerns, to experiment and adapt in response to successes and shortcomings, and to ensure a match between resources and responsibilities in implementing public policies;

11. *Stresses* that the governance challenges of sustainable development are characterized by growing complexity and dynamism in decision-making and implementation mechanisms, and that Member States and international organizations should undertake reforms aimed at promoting an innovative environment, agile approaches, a culture of collaboration, openness and the sharing of knowledge; scientific, technological and analytical tools should be used as instruments to support innovative decision-making and implementation in the public sector and reduce risks to public accountability and trust arising from the governance complexity of public administration;

12. *Reiterates* the need to coordinate capacity-building activities at the international, national and local levels, and encourages Member States to renew efforts to raise awareness and expand the use of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action to focus on aid and resource allocation;

13. *Acknowledges* the indispensable role of supreme audit institutions in holding Governments accountable for the use of resources and their performance in achieving development goals, and calls for including the independence of supreme audit institutions and related capacity development as essential elements of the post-2015 development agenda;

14. *Requests* the Secretariat to continue:

(a) To address gaps in research, monitoring, capacity development and implementation in governance and public administration and, in particular, to further develop its public administration country studies, to continue addressing emerging issues in public administration through the *United Nations E-Government Survey* and the *World Public Sector Report* and to increase the scope and depth of its

[3] General Assembly resolution 68/198.

capacity development activities with the aim of better assisting countries, according to their specific contexts and needs, in strengthening participatory governance and citizen engagement, managing development, public accountability and anti-corruption, including promoting the independence and strengthening the capacity of supreme audit institutions, strengthening institutional and human capacities in public administration, advancing public-private partnerships, promoting innovation and knowledge transfer in the public sector and better defining e-government strategies and policies;

(b) To promote transformative government and innovation in public governance so as to achieve sustainable development by further promoting advocacy and knowledge transfer on good governance at the global, regional, national and local levels, through, inter alia, United Nations Public Service Day, the United Nations Public Service Awards and the United Nations Public Administration Network;

(c) To further strengthen governance and public administration capacity development through the provision of advisory services, training, including online training, the development of capacity-building tools, including self-assessment and awareness-raising, and technical cooperation projects such as the United Nations Project Office on Governance and the Internet Governance Forum secretariat, and various other models of technical cooperation to raise extrabudgetary funding to enable the secretariat to do its work;

(d) To assist in the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its first phase, held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003,[4] and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, adopted by the Summit at its second phase, held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005,[5] on issues related to e-government, e-participation, mobile government, open government data, cyberspace, Internet governance and the use of information and communications technologies;

(e) To continue its work on supporting the reconstruction of governance and public administration in post-conflict countries for quick recovery and sustainable development.

[4] See A/C.2/59/3, annex.
[5] See A/60/687.

Chapter II
Organization of the session

A. Duration of the session

2. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration, established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45, consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity by the Council upon the nomination of the Secretary-General. The Committee held its thirteenth session at United Nations Headquarters from 7 to 11 April 2014.

B. Attendance

3. Twenty-four Committee members attended the session. Observers from organizations of the United Nations system and from intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations also attended.

4. The following Committee members participated in the session: Dalmas M. O. Anyango (Kenya), Giuseppe Maria Armenia (Italy), Türksel Kaya Bensghir (Turkey), Rowena G. Bethel (Bahamas), José Castelazo (Mexico), Xiaochu Dai (China), Meredith Edwards (Australia), Walter Fust (Switzerland), Alexandre Navarro Garcia (Brazil), Angelita Gregorio-Medel (Philippines), Igor Khalevinskiy (Russian Federation), Mushtaq Khan (Bangladesh), Francisco Longo Martínez (Spain), Palouki Massina (Togo), Paul Oquist (Nicaragua), Marta Oyhanarte (Argentina), Eko Prasojo (Indonesia), Odette R. Ramsingh (South Africa), Allan Rosenbaum (United States of America), Margaret Saner (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Dona Scola (Republic of Moldova), Pontso Susan Matumelo Sekatle (Lesotho), Najat Zarrouk (Morocco), Jan Ziekow (Germany).

5. Observers were invited to provide input on the theme and sub-themes in advance of the session. A total of seven papers were received, which served to inform the Committee in its work. The list of observers who attended the session can be viewed on the website of the United Nations Public Administration Network at www.unpan.org/cepa.

C. Agenda

6. The agenda of the Committee for its thirteenth session was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Transforming public administration for sustainable development:
   (a) Strengthening national and local capacities for sustainable development management;
   (b) Promoting leadership, innovation and risk management for sustainable development;
   (c) Invigorating the professionalism and morale of the public service.

4. Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance.

5. Agenda for the fourteenth session of the Committee of Experts.

D. Election of officers

7. The following members served as officers of the Committee during its thirteenth session:

Chair:

Margaret Saner (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

Vice-Chairs:

Dalmas M. O. Anyango (Kenya)
Rowena G. Bethel (Bahamas)
Igor Khalevinskiy (Russian Federation)

Rapporteur:

Angelita Gregorio-Medel (Philippines)

Chapter III
Summary of proceedings and conclusions

A. Work of the Committee

8. The Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, John-Mary Kauzya, called the session to order and welcomed the participants.

9. The President of the Economic and Social Council, Martin Sajdik, made an opening statement. The President noted that, in an increasingly interconnected world, policy coherence and complementarity are essential at all levels. In that regard, he encouraged the Committee to contribute actively to the Council's priorities in 2014, including achieving the Millennium Development Goals and charting the way for an ambitious and universal sustainable development agenda. The importance of governance in promoting sustainable development, environmental sustainability, and peace and security was well recognized. Inadequate institutional capacity often explained the delays and difficulties in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The President also underlined that the rule of law is an essential prerequisite for good governance and an inclusive, participatory approach to public affairs. He also drew attention to the significance of technological innovation even as he pointed out that the risks and challenges posed by information and communications technology need to be considered.

10. The Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, Wu Hongbo, emphasized that the subject of sustainable development was of intense interest in the United Nations. Governments had affirmed that, to achieve sustainable development, good governance, peace and security, respect for human rights and the rule of law were essential, with institutions at all levels that were effective, transparent, accountable and democratic. He observed that a number of specific elements of governance for sustainable development had been articulated at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development held in June 2012, such as broad and meaningful participation in public affairs, access to public services and information, and the leading role of government in establishing appropriate regulatory and policy frameworks. The Under-Secretary-General suggested that the Committee reflect on these crucial signposts of institutional capacity and on their connection to the subject of the current deliberations.

B. Transforming public administration for sustainable development

Plenary discussion

11. The Chair, Margaret Saner, introduced the session's main theme, which was transforming public administration for sustainable development. The discussion focused on three sub-themes within the broader scope of public administration transformation, namely, strengthening national and local capacities for sustainable development management; promoting leadership, innovation and risk management for sustainable development; and invigorating the professionalism and morale of the public service.

12. Najat Zarrouk presented her paper on strengthening national and local capacities for sustainable development management (E/C.16/2014/2). She noted that there is wide consensus that a transformation of governance is needed, both to achieve sustainable development as an end in itself and as a worthwhile investment. Her paper expounded the view that a new vision of capacity-building at all levels is vital to transform governance and to ensure that it served the needs of sustainable development. A central challenge was to build capacity for transforming government and setting it on a path to sustainable development when, in some cases, even the basic foundations for diagnosing the problems and identifying the gaps and barriers in implementation and to meeting goals were lacking. This was particularly the case in developing countries, countries in transition, countries experiencing or emerging from conflict and countries with limited income.

13. While significant progress has been made in human development in the public sector, shortcomings in governance, capacity and skills, particularly in public institutions, are acknowledged to be at the root of some of the difficulties involved in the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals. Capacity-building is key to transforming governance, strengthening integrity, improving skills, enhancing professionalism and mobilizing citizens, thus promoting a new culture of good governance, driving democracy and the development agenda.

14. The presenter also emphasized that capacity-building must be properly defined, adhere to fundamental principles, be guided by strong, committed, competent and ethical leadership, and be part of a holistic national strategy. Consideration should also be given to the set of skills needed to design, implement, monitor and evaluate strategies, plans and programmes at the national and local levels. To these ends, Ms. Zarrouk suggested that a long-term road map is needed at the national and local levels, taking into account the institutional setting, distinctions, roles, attributions and responsibilities, available resources and objectives or results to be attained. Certain issues were of central importance. They included sustainable urbanization, which required giving priority to local actors as agents of change, as well as human capital, promotion of excellence, use of new technologies and citizen participation.

15. The paper of the second presenter, Walter Fust, focused on leadership, innovation and risk management for sustainable development (E/C.16/2014/3). The exponential rise in the complexity of public administration is a central challenge for government leaders grappling with transformation for sustainable development. Government officials have a notable facility for adding complexity but are generally weak when it comes to managing and reducing it. One approach would be for leaders to communicate policy objectives in more "user-friendly" terms in order to improve public service delivery. At the same time, public administrators needed to be sure that the policy objectives they were pursuing, such as the Millennium Development Goals, had been sanctioned by parliaments and integrated into national or even possibly local policy frameworks.

16. A clear direction and specification of accountable parties, tasked with implementation, are essential. For sustainable development, a long-term perspective is needed. For this to occur, public administrators need to take responsibility for communicating advice and options to political leaders confronted by extremely short-term pressures from the media. This poses a challenge, as public administrators are often unable to draw on data and other decision-making tools to

guide policymaking. Government leaders may also not fully appreciate when an "innovation" is really new or simply a change in technology. Moreover, there might be calls for more democracy, but support is often needed in actually undertaking effective participatory strategies and methodologies for meaningful stakeholder involvement.

17. With respect to risks, there are excellent risk assessment tools in use, but these tools tend to be used in a fragmented manner. Risk management entails identification and evaluation of the possible outcomes of both action and inaction. Mr. Fust noted that risk management is an inherent element of sustainable development and that there are risks attached both to failure to achieve sustainable development and to failure to carry out a risk assessment. He suggested that Governments must consider establishing the position of "chief risk officer" at a high level to measure and manage risk across government. Finally, Governments and international organizations must put an end to the unfortunate behaviour of shelving or putting aside the accomplishments and legacy of predecessor administrations upon a new government's assumption of power. This is a waste of the country's invested resources and contrary to the essence of capacity-building. Instead, a careful study and astute assessment of what could be enriched, built on, or turned around must be undertaken. Public administration must pursue change that will improve the achievement of sustainable goals and not for the sake of change per se.

18. Odette Ramsingh presented her paper on invigorating the professionalism and morale of the public service in Africa (E/C.16/2014/4). With 2015 on the horizon, there is much discussion and analysis about the progress made on achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 agenda. She observed that, while there clearly had been successes, the achievements had been uneven, especially in Africa. Many lessons could be drawn from the experiences of the past decade. This next phase would be full of challenges in a very different context from a decade before.

19. In Africa, the public service could be thought of as the engine room of development. Governments delivered on the sustainable development agenda through their public services and public service personnel. The resilience of Africa's public services and the profile of its public servants could be viewed through the lens of the various reforms. It could be argued that the public service in the post-colonial era had pride of place and that the waves of continuous and constant reform had had an impact on it. Thus, public services had come to grips with the approach of 2015, and the discussion had already moved to the post-2015 development agenda. Are these public services ready to respond to a post-2015 development agenda? What is the mindset of public servants and do they have the ethos, behavioural patterns, and motivation to deliver on a sustainable development agenda?

20. The Millennium Development Goals provided a compelling vision, and there was no doubt that the post-2015 agenda would do likewise. However, delivery on the vision required invigorated and motivated public servants. There are key questions that need to be asked. Is sufficient attention being given to the change management processes and culture needed to foster the type of public service necessary for the new journey and the type of public servant required to respond to the new challenge? Of greater importance, it raises questions as to how public services can build the leadership, capacity and morale to respond to the new

challenges, especially in terms of the organizational culture required by the sustainable development agenda.

21. In the discussion that ensued, the Committee noted that efforts to transform public institutions were usually not neutral. One has to consider whose interests are at stake along the various paths to reform, particularly given the increasing complexity of government administration. There are likely to be winners and losers involved. While Governments cannot in good faith abdicate their responsibility to advance and protect the public interest, a balanced approach to sustainable development depends on taking the interests of all citizens into account and, in this regard, consultation, engagement and collaboration are essential. Managing such processes is challenging everywhere but especially in countries that are struggling with development. Special consideration should be given to involving the illiterate and disadvantaged in reform efforts.

22. In some cases, risk avoidance on the part of administrators facing competing demands would ensure the status quo. In other cases, where plans for reform had been pursued, public administration had been hijacked by corruption and self-enrichment, with stakeholders cynically competing to see who could make the most money from government authority and largesse. A set of detailed sustainable development goals, consistent with national realities and priorities, that could be taken up by the highest level of political leadership would help towards addressing these problems. Political commitment must mitigate the risks faced by heads of administrative units who might be concerned about losing their jobs if reform efforts were pursued too vigorously and still failed. Setting sustainable development goals must be accompanied by budgetary adjustments to reflect the political priorities behind the needed transformation. At the same time, there may be a need to introduce term limits and recall procedures for politicians in democratic systems to reduce the likelihood of encountering the same problems of lack of motivation and compromised integrity among political representatives.

23. The question of the sustained pursuit of priority development objectives and institutional capacity-building arose in this connection. The practice of appointing permanent secretaries was suggested as way to depoliticize public administration. However, this would not be effective if those permanent appointees advanced their own political and vested interests. A suggestion was made to introduce assessment tools to gauge institutional performance as a way of refocusing attention on the results of public policy, for which administrative heads would be held responsible. Such results should embody the needs of citizens, for example in the areas of health, education, water, access to infrastructure and other essentials having an impact on quality of life and social cohesion.

24. Positive action on sustainable development calls for a transformation of institutional and even organizational culture, for example in the form of values-based leadership practices. It was found that measures to achieve greater gender equality and expand diversity in organizations, notably in leadership positions, had had the effect of increasing flexibility and agility and led to higher levels of productivity. Pursuing a range of measures to ensure greater gender equality may therefore be a recommended practice in pursuit of a future sustainable development agenda.

Thematic group discussions

25. The Committee divided itself into three groups over the course of two meetings to allow for a more in-depth examination and exchange of the session's sub-themes before reconvening in plenary meeting.

Strengthening national and local capacities for sustainable development management

26. One group examined the sub-theme "strengthening national and local capacities for sustainable development management". During its discussion, the group noted that the sustainable development aspirations of the international community called for good governance in every country and at all levels, covering the legislative, executive and judicial branches, as well as local government and authorities. A challenge was to define governance improvements that were achievable in discrete steps while recognizing that the immediate tasks would be different in different contexts. Capacity-building should be matched to specific objectives and would depend on the quality of governance mechanisms and public perceptions of government.

27. Development policy and development management could not be decoupled from each other because effective policies require appropriate governance structures for their implementation. For example, policy that was good in theory could fail in practice if governance capabilities failed to prevent capture by powerful interests without delivering results for society or promoting sustainable development. Transformative governance involves thinking through the relationship between development policy and development management and adopting policy priorities that are carefully and fully implemented. A combination of incremental improvements in governance capacity that allowed evolving developmental policies to be effectively implemented could help to sustain development and enable society to approach broader social development and capacity development.

28. A key challenge was not what should be done in terms of policy content but how it should be done and with whom in terms of process, and where it should occur. The concept of "experimentalist governance" described the involvement of stakeholders in setting broad goals, with some autonomy, and having the space to try out better ways to solve local problems, local units reporting regularly on performance via peer review, and goals being evaluated in the light of lessons learned and revisited during implementation. The distinguishing features of this concept were its non-bureaucratic practices, the learning process, and new forms of accountability. Not all proposals and approaches are applicable to every country. Each country should have the option of selecting relevant goals and implementing related strategies at both the national and the local levels.

29. It was suggested that the first step was to identify problems that needed to be addressed while advising Governments to focus on priorities that would dramatically change people's lives. As a next step, Governments could be encouraged to act on these problems, specifically identifying and addressing the governance risks, the processes to be improved and the capacities needed to implement them. It was also suggested that a transparent process is needed in the identification of areas that require capacity-building interventions and implementation approaches, strategies and methodologies ("how"). The importance of benchmarks and clarity of tasking and mandates of involved stakeholders was also emphasized. Independent supreme audit institutions with other independent

oversight institutions could make a significant contribution to monitoring and accounting for public sector performance in achieving development goals.

30. Women's participation and leadership in the public sector are important elements of capacity-building and could be improved by different means, such as applying international pressure to uphold international commitments, disseminating information on the relevant conventions on women's condition and rights, encouraging the promulgation of a strong and clear vision by the highest authority of the State, supporting a well-organized civil society, creating an enabling environment for the advancement of women, including measures to ensure progress towards gender equality, capacity-building, databases on women in public service, and networking. Inclusive engagement in indigenous communities that brings a stronger sense of ownership and leadership to women in order to achieve desired goals was also stressed. A suite of strategies to empower women could include confronting social norms and institutions which discriminate against women, databases on women in public service, tracking government expenditure by gender and other initiatives. Government could gain from providing enabling frameworks and modalities for citizen engagement. Learning by doing was underlined as an effective approach in this regard.

31. Where collaboration was concerned, the role of non-State actors should be defined clearly at each stage. If collaboration was a means of co-production, then questions such as "At what level?", "Why?", "With what?" and "When?" should be posed. These questions could only be answered with regard to the very specific context of each country. There should be an efficiency end-point and a strategic point of accountability in the collaboration process. Identifying these borders would be crucial for the success and sustainability of the collaboration.

Promoting leadership, innovation and risk management for sustainable development

32. A second group examined the sub-theme "promoting leadership, innovation and risk management for sustainable development". During its discussion, the group observed that change and improvement depend on technology but that there were impediments to its adoption. Resistance by public administrators and managers in this regard was often due to a lack of understanding of the potential application and use of information and communications technology. Public sector managers should therefore be made aware of this and they must be given the chance to gain access to education and training opportunities in this area so that they can actively get involved and become effective in transforming governance practices with confidence, improving public administration processes, and taking service delivery to the levels of efficiency and effectiveness made possible by the use of technology. Indeed, training in information and communications technology could be seen as a precondition for the successful adoption and implementation of innovation. At the same time, selected experiences with public administration in Europe had underscored the importance of updating institutional and legal frameworks to accommodate new technology. Indeed, laws and regulations should be guided by information and communications technology rather than constrain it as is the case in many countries.

33. Open government data was one information and communications technology issue that called for attention. It would be helpful to consider how to enhance institutional capacity, through human resource development, to respond to the need

for inclusion and openness of information. Given the need for technological literacy, university and secondary school curricula should be revised with the aim of improving digital skills in society. Moreover, "big data" was another challenge for public administration requiring proper solutions. The use of such data could be beneficial to sustainable development, as it would allow a fuller picture of a situation while anchoring the ensuing analysis in data and possibly even evidence, including of the social dimension of public policy.

34. The mindset of political leaders is very important in public policy and is a major factor in reform processes. It was pointed out that determined and focused action on the advancement of women had in some countries resulted in equality in the number of men and women in parliament, including at the ministerial level. The positive impact of strong leadership and well-designed policies, within prescribed areas of responsibility, could be seen in many other practical cases, for example in connection with improvements in urban air quality, management of ports and financing of railway infrastructure. All of the initiatives mentioned were budget-neutral or budget-positive. Results had been attained through the effective use of resources, without an increase in public expenditure.

35. The need to underline organizational change and ways of managing change within public administration was also stressed. Inclusion of stakeholders was important but institutions need to prepare themselves in involving citizens, expanding engagement, and ensuring that suitable adjustments are made to institutional frameworks to accommodate new forms of interaction.

36. The issues of climate change and financing of mitigation and adaptation measures, ad hoc versus standing institutions, risk management, youth unemployment, and reforms to restore trust in government and the role of social media also figured in the discussion. The complexity of issues to be addressed by public administration required first and foremost that government leaders and officials be capable of appreciating the breadth of concerns, zeroing in on priorities while balancing risks and taking decisions on interconnected public policy concerns. Above all, public administration capacities need to be aligned with national development goals, including those based on regional and international commitments, given the increasing interdependency of the possible impacts of national policy on other countries. Monitoring and evaluation need to be instituted to track implementation, possibly provide corrective measures, and improve policymaking.

Invigorating the professionalism and morale of the public service

37. A third group examined the sub-theme "invigorating the professionalism and morale of the public service". The group observed that, for public administration to be able to effectively address sustainable development challenges, it is necessary to invigorate professionalism in the civil service, that is, to boost its "spirit" by promoting the rule of law, principles of justice, equality, selflessness, creativity and the like and to do so in conformity with national culture and context. Public service is not an ordinary profession, therefore professionalism needs to be enhanced not only by retaining the best public servants through various incentives, but also by nurturing and increasing the prestige of public administration, through effective selection and appointment policies, adequate disciplinary actions and efficient performance monitoring.

38. There were different concerns relating to the capacity of public administration to address contemporary developmental challenges. These concerns could be divided into three groups: those related to the individual performance of a public employee; those related to the institutional level of performance; and those related to the overall socioeconomic and cultural environment within which public administration functions. Broadly speaking, while reforms in public administration are critically needed to address new development challenges in the post-2015 period, it is essential that these reforms be aligned with and geared towards advancing the achievement of objectives under national strategic development agendas. Strong and effective governance is a prerequisite to addressing various problems and overcoming challenges in the broad context of sustainable development.

39. Paying more attention to human capital development is absolutely necessary for public administration to deliver on sustainable development objectives, motivation and professionalization being among the more important components. Special attention should be given to boosting the creativity of public servants. In this connection, political leadership and commitment are essential and not negotiable, as they determine values in public service.

40. It was emphasized that the ethical aspects of the professionalization of the public service, its training and recertification should not be neglected. The issue of moral standards is very current. Ethics and codes of conduct are gaining significance. Developing social capital through continuous education in public service, both general and vocational, and the role of training institutions were important in this process.

41. Cross-cutting political consensus on the role of public administration for the implementation of the national development agenda is vital and, therefore, the professionalization of the public service must be viewed in the broadest possible way by all concerned political and administrative stakeholders and in the context of the national environment. The principles of meritocracy, impartiality and talent management need to be consistently applied in the recruitment, selection, promotion and retention of the best and most motivated public servants.

42. It was suggested that where there is criticism and a general inclination of the public to undervalue public administration, the response should be to enhance its professionalism, morale and ethics, and maintain its neutrality and impartiality as well as its ability to equitably deliver quality services. It was also necessary to promote the role of the Government in society as the most fundamental institution able to address common challenges and effectively advance the interest of public employees to elevate the reputation and respect for public service.

43. It was acknowledged that, owing to a limited number of existing successful practices in many countries, it was a difficult task to link career development to performance and implement performance-based recognition in the public service. Performance management is always helped by effective accountability mechanisms in institutions of public administration and by remaining open to monitoring by society. However, applying accountability and monitoring mechanisms must always take into consideration cultural diversity.

Resumed plenary discussion

44. The resumed plenary discussion of agenda item 3 on transforming public administration for sustainable development began with reflections on the governance issue of sustainable urbanization. The Chair invited Frank Zerunyan, Professor of the Practice of Governance at the University of California School of Public Policy and representative of the Southern California Association of Governments, to share his experiences with sustainable urbanization.

45. Mr. Zerunyan recalled that some 51 per cent of the world population today lived in urban areas. In 2030 this number was expected to rise to 70 per cent, both as a result of movement of people from rural to urban areas and, in the case of California, from peripheral urban areas back to the city centre. It would be tremendously important for local policy makers to design and implement strategies addressing economic development, quality of life, jobs, education, environmental sustainability, transportation, social justice, participatory governance and affordable housing with this trend in mind.

46. Local-level sustainable development plans developed together with local communities were a mechanism that had proved valuable. It was not generally feasible to change an urban area wholesale. Instead, one should rely on a series of highly visible "small wins" that would demonstrate results quickly, with communities engaged through information, consultation, partnerships and empowerment, as has been the case in Melbourne, Mexico City, Singapore and other places. Southern California had begun to combat the effects of sprawl such as traffic jams, poor air quality, and a jobs-to-housing imbalance by both encouraging development around major transit nodes and introducing a sustainability initiative focusing on housing, land use, air quality, economic development, the movement of goods and people, "human-scale" urban design, sustainable building practices, renewable energy and other factors. Above all, successful urbanization depended on effective policymaking and on the empowerment of communities through democratic, inclusive and collaborative decision-making.

47. Committee members commented that, given urbanization trends, in 25 years one should expect metropolitan forms of government to be widespread. This raised a number of concerns that must be factored into sustainability plans. For example, there was a concern that wealth and even health, cultural and other services had a tendency to become concentrated in the centre of metropolitan areas with marginalization of the periphery. Distribution of authority and financial resources was another matter that would need to be addressed to the satisfaction of stakeholders.

48. Subsequently, the main observations arising from the thematic discussions were presented for consideration. The Committee generally agreed with the assessments of the three discussion groups, while making further observations.

49. The Committee underlined the need to promote transformational governance as one of the priority challenges for sustainable development, while also highlighting capacity-building for its strategic role in promoting governance. Capacity-building efforts must be based, above all, on the integration of all governance dimensions, leadership, promotion of women's empowerment and a participatory bottom-up approach including ensuring local autonomy and stakeholder involvement.

50. In this connection, the Committee dedicated much of its discussion to the critical role of public administration and public servants as well as the urgent need to invigorate the public service and strengthen its role in society alongside improving governance and institutions. A change of mindset, including the professionalization of the public service, was needed to positively influence social culture in the public sector towards sustainable development. Learning is fundamental to improving the performance of the public sector, including learning from failure.

51. For effective implementation, the Committee found that matching adequate resources to the targeted goals, including at the local level, was indispensable for the successful implementation and realization of local autonomy and sustainable development projects such as the Green Fund. Reference was made to concrete cases of such transformation in Africa, as the process of transformation heavily depends on financing. Other important elements contributing to the implementation process for sustainable development include comprehensive diagnosis, assessment and evaluation, and transparent accountability mechanisms.

52. Generally speaking, and in the particular context of the post-2015 period, the importance of innovation, including information and communications technologies, was affirmed. It was stated that innovation takes place at all levels, including in particular at the local level. Putting innovation discussion into perspective and while acknowledging important innovation occurring in the society, the Committee affirmed the importance and central role of the government and its regulatory framework, by citing initially government-funded cases such as geographic information system and energy technology. In a similar vein, while stressing the role of society, social culture and collaboration with stakeholders, the Committee drew attention to the need for strong government having public servants with invigorated morale.

53. It was also noted that a fundamental element of effective implementation was the ability to define and deliver specific objectives that would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals.

54. With respect to the role of the Secretariat, there is a need to promote capacity-building within the public service, paying attention to the particular needs of each country. Provision of training opportunities by the United Nations was encouraged. In this regard the following are also deemed important: helping to find the right match between training programmes for appropriate participants, applying suitable learning strategies, methodologies and tools for the training of public servants, and tracking the results of those training interventions. In addition, information dissemination was highlighted as an important area of contribution by the United Nations to capacity-building.

55. Other issues that emerged during the plenary discussion and which were highlighted as important by the Committee and observers include: a code of conduct and its possible drafting by the Secretariat, trust-building as a core requirement for capacity-building and enhancing the professionalization of public servants, economic development as a factor of local development and autonomy, and timely preparation of transformation road maps and timeline.

Conclusions and recommendations on transforming public administration for sustainable development

56. The Committee concurred strongly with the view that governance, the rule of law and capable institutions are both outcomes and enablers, advancing all three pillars of sustainable development and the post-2015 development agenda. The Committee also stressed the point that the means of implementation is an integral component in achieving sustainable development, particularly as it relates to the institutions responsible for coordinating, regulating and implementing public policy responses to economic, social and environmental issues. At the same time, any future sustainable development goals should be translated and adapted at the national level in accordance with the conditions and priorities of each country.

57. The transformation of public administration for sustainable development calls for strengthening the capacity of government at the national and local levels. Adequate capability-building should be ensured to identify governance risks, to identify the optimal level at which to implement a solution to public policy concerns, to experiment and adapt in response to successes and shortcomings, and to ensure a match between resources and responsibilities.

58. With regard to promoting leadership, innovation and risk management, it should be recognized that political will and leadership remain crucial for successful reform in public administration to be able to handle priority public policy issues and reduce risks in the areas of sustainable development, sustainable urbanization, climate change, youth unemployment, and the means of implementation of such policies. To achieve meaningful results in sustainable development, objectives require the continuity of successful policies and implementation mechanisms over the medium to long term.

59. Given the dynamism and complexity of ever more challenging demands, public institutions should be enhanced in terms of creating an innovative environment, agile approaches and a collaborative culture, and sharing and creating knowledge. In this regard, scientific, technological and analytical tools should be used as instruments to support decision-making and reduce risks to enable innovative decisions that aim to reduce the complexity of government administration.

60. Technology and e-government are enablers of more efficient, transparent, participatory and accountable governance. They should improve government processes as well as public service delivery. Accordingly, awareness and training in the field of information and communications technology should be increased, and the right incentives should be introduced in public institutions, as they are considered preconditions for the successful adoption and implementation of innovation.

61. With regard to strengthening professionalism and morale, the United Nations could help to initiate discourse on the need for a strong and effective government needed to spearhead the public service and civil society alike in the pursuit of sustainable development. Strong government will clearly bring increased trust, recognition of government and public service, and will contribute to finding solutions to governance problems at all levels, including the need for enhanced professionalism and morale in the public service.

62. The Committee emphasized the need to promote knowledge exchange among public service training institutions, universities, institutes of public administration, professional associations and relevant management development institutes in order to build human resource capacity and promote professionalism and improve morale in the public service. The role of such institutions in addressing sustainable development challenges should be reassessed.

63. Capacity-building on professional leadership within the public service that targets both political and senior administrative levels should be invigorated. This is crucial to the formulation of strategic approaches for the achievement of sustainable development. In acknowledging the critical need for maintaining ethics, the Committee recommends the continued promotion of regional and national charters of public service, and strengthening public administration by introducing effective training programmes for public sector employees and promoting codes of conduct and ethical norms and values.

64. The Committee recommends that coordination of capacity-building activities at both international and national levels be strengthened, inter alia, by raising the awareness of and utilizing the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness to focus aid and resource allocation. Capacity-building should also be monitored, benchmarked, audited and evaluated against declared objectives. In providing assistance to countries in developing public administration and public service capacities to these ends, particular attention should be paid to the special needs of the least developed countries, countries emerging from conflict, those in transition, and those with limited resources.

65. The Committee recommends that the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and conferences of the parties to United Nations conventions include in all resolutions and requests for commitments from parties specifications as to the means of implementation, including identification of the means and sources of finance, requisite transfer of technology such as information and communications technology, and capacity-building needs, including in the areas of leadership, innovation and risk management. The Committee concluded that in the twenty-first century there is no sustainable development without taking into account the risks, cumulative costs, and structural adaptations of climate variability, including the leading role of the citizenry in these processes.

C. Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance

66. The Secretariat submitted a report (E/C.16/2014/5) highlighting the major activities undertaken or planned in the current biennium. The meeting on this item, chaired by Margaret Saner, included a presentation by the chiefs of the three Branches of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

Working group I
Public administration capacity: institutional and human resource development

67. The Public Administration Capacity Branch outlined its objectives, mandate and work programme. During the period 2012-2013, the Branch had advanced the work on (1) research and knowledge-sharing related to governance, public

administration and development; (2) institutional development and human resource capacity-building in public administration; (3) servicing intergovernmental bodies; and (4) undertaking advisory services in the field. The Branch provided capacity-building on institutional and human resources development; furthered its work on the United Nations Public Service Awards, which is a flagship product of the Division; continued promoting and disseminating innovative practices in public governance though recognition of best practices worldwide; and developed online training tools as the medium of knowledge-sharing. The Branch undertook various field missions, providing advisory services on public sector reform in Haiti, Morocco, Rwanda and Togo, at the regional level in Africa and for selected least developed countries. The findings and recommendations of advisory missions and the outcomes of training activities, and related publications, were coupled with ongoing normative and advocacy work.

Working group II
E-government and information and communications technologies for development

68. The e-Government Branch highlighted its holistic approach to its activities with a focus on capacity-building, normative work, and analysis and research. The activities of the Branch fall under three thematic areas, namely, (1) institutional frameworks and leadership for e-government development; (2) e-government as an enabler of collaborative governance; and (3) open governance for sustainable development and innovation in service delivery. The Branch produces and publishes the *United Nations E-Government Survey*, and undertakes capacity-building and other technical cooperation activities that have resulted in over 30 technical missions in all regions. The activities of the United Nations Project Office on Governance, projects in Colombia, Kazakhstan and the United Arab Emirates were briefly presented. The Head of the United Nations Project Office on Governance spoke on the work of the Office and its achievements. The presentation concluded with the proposed next steps concerning the transformative sustainable post-2015 development agenda.

Working group III
Citizen engagement in managing development, open government data

69. The Development Management Branch presented its activities on advocacy and normative support, research and analysis, knowledge-sharing and training, and advisory services carried out in 2013-2014. Under the umbrella of citizen engagement for development management, the Branch addresses three sub-themes, namely, (1) public accountability; (2) e-participation; and (3) the institutional framework for citizen engagement. The Branch has produced the 2014 *World Public Sector Report* on responsive and accountable public governance for the post-2015 development agenda. The Branch also convenes the governance and institution-building cluster of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs. The activities of the secretariat of the Internet Governance Forum were presented through a video message. The ninth meeting of the Forum will be held in Turkey with the theme of connecting continents for enhanced multi-stakeholder Internet governance.

70. Following a brief question-and-answer session to clarify some inputs from the speakers, the Committee broke into working groups organized by Branch for an in-depth discussion of the various parts of the work programme and to hear the

observations of the participants. After the working group session, the experts reconvened in a plenary meeting chaired by Dalmas M. O. Anyango.

Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee on the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance

71. The Committee discussed its role in addressing public administration and capacity-building and the need for authoritative and insightful advice on governance and public administration, inter alia by building strategic partnerships and networks and emphasizing a regional approach to capacity development. To take on this work with limited resources, there was an apparent need to reach out to Member States to improve awareness of the programme and, with regard to online training services, to pursue partnerships with prestigious universities and institutes of public administration. The United Nations Public Service Awards should be given every two years. Alternatively, Member States might be asked to pay a fee for their nominations. The Committee supported the recruitment of an external consultant to review the United Nations Public Service Awards.

72. The Committee emphasized the importance of standardization of practices, promotion of partnerships, information and communications technology and e-libraries, especially in view of the fact that cultural diversity and limited availability of text in other languages may prevent full use of the online courses and other resources made available through the United Nations Public Administration Network.

73. The discipline of public administration was in general beset by fragmentation with no consistent message being delivered. Bringing together some of the leading public administration organizations around the world on this subject may help support a cohesive capacity-building framework. A suggestion was made that the Secretariat support work on a universal charter of public administration values and continue to support regional and national efforts in this regard.

74. The members of the Committee agreed to assist the Secretariat in its functions by utilizing their networks, contacts with parliamentarians, knowledge of experts, contacts with national Governments, and Permanent Missions to the United Nations, and by strengthening contacts with newly industrialized countries, Parliaments and other constituencies, including the promotion of "buy-in" from these institutions. The Committee further recommended that its members assist in disseminating guidelines on innovations in public administration in order to provide support and legitimacy. The Committee proposed the enhancement of an online environment for these and other purposes, possibly utilizing the United Nations Public Administration Network and other means.

75. The Committee commented on the relevance of the *United Nations E-Government Survey* to countries globally and suggested that the Secretariat work as actively as possible to disseminate the contents widely in all regions and throughout all Member States, Parliaments and other relevant institutions.

76. The Committee members noted that key international issues pertaining to information and communications technology would not go away. On the contrary, they will increase in importance. These include big data, open government, cyber-security, the data revolution, and the growing gap between policy and implementation. There is a need for Governments to advance policies that would

facilitate handling these challenges at the global, national and subnational levels as a matter of priority. The Committee proposed that the Secretariat support the Economic and Social Council in these matters, as appropriate, while ensuring impartiality and taking into account the views of all countries and regions.

77. The Committee encouraged the Secretariat to raise awareness of how the implementation of e-government practices could help in the achievement of national goals and internationally agreed development goals, and recommended focusing on raising the awareness of e-leaders on socio-technological issues related to public administration.

78. Creating feedback mechanisms for citizens is critical for successful engagement and public discourse on important development strategies, and the improvement of public services. In addition, since trust and confidence in Governments are declining, a key responsibility for Governments is to engage more effectively with citizens, ensuring that they have a greater role in decision-making processes. The Secretariat should therefore pursue a public accountability agenda, especially demonstrating the potential impact of investment in involving citizens in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda.

79. Involving civil society actors with strong technical capacity in policy debates is required in creating room for citizen engagement. Independent and effective media and journalism can assist in framing public debates too, thus increasing the potential for constructive outcomes. It is important to use various modalities for engagement, including e-participation, and to know when and how to engage stakeholders in policymaking processes.

80. The attitude and behaviour of public servants towards citizen engagement needs to change, together with developing their skills and knowledge to improve their effectiveness in engaging with citizens. In this regard, the Secretariat should advocate for and provide advisory services upon request, on a range of participatory mechanisms, including traditional mechanisms as well as e-participation.

81. Examples in various countries have demonstrated that citizen engagement and active participation can initiate important social changes. The Secretariat should continue its work on the United Nations Public Administration Country Studies, in particular focusing on the case studies of citizen engagement, and the capacity and readiness of different countries to engage through formal and informal institutions.

82. Supreme audit institutions have an important role in helping citizens to assess whether Governments are achieving their goals. There is an increasing trend towards the involvement of citizens in planning audit work, publicizing the reports of supreme audit institutions and tracking the implementation of recommendations. It is important for supreme audit institutions to do objective checks and to use benchmarks in performance audits at the global, regional or country levels. In improving public accountability, supreme audit institutions need to guard against taking a political stance and at the same time recognize that government decisions may not be entirely technical. They should employ risk mitigation strategies to ensure their independence, for instance, by spelling out the criteria of any assessments or evaluations that uphold the international standards of supreme audit institutions. The Secretariat should work to support and promote the independence of supreme audit institutions and strengthen their capacity, including involving citizens for better transparency and accountability, working with organizations such

as the International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions, the World Bank and other agencies.

83. To create an enabling environment by providing the means for a more effective implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda, the Secretariat should continue its efforts to ensure closely coordinated efforts with United Nations and non-United Nations bodies, and make strategic alliances with organizations such as the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and others.

84. While highlighting the leadership, professionalism and engagement of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, especially in its support of the Committee's work and session, the Committee members took note of the continuing vacancy in the management of the Division, and hoped they could look forward to the appointment of a new Director soon.

85. Finally, the Committee requested full implementation of an online environment for its own work, possibly utilizing the United Nations Public Administration Network or other means.

D. Proposed programme of work and agenda for the next session of the Committee and preliminary review of the draft report of the Committee

86. While the Committee agreed to recommend the main theme of "building trust in government" for the fourteenth session, the more specific sub-themes were not decided, with the understanding that they should reflect the governance and public administration aspects of the Economic and Social Council's annual ministerial review and integration segment for 2015, whose themes had not been decided at the time of the Committee's thirteenth session.

87. The Committee agreed to convene its fourteenth session from 20 to 24 April 2015 and recommended the following agenda for adoption by the Economic and Social Council:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Building trust in government.
4. Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance.
5. Agenda for the fourteenth session of the Committee of Experts.

88. The Committee adopted the draft report on its thirteenth session.

Annex

List of documents

Symbol	*Agenda item*	*Title or description*
E/C.16/2014/1	2	Provisional agenda and organization of work
E/C.16/2014/2	3	Strengthening national and local capacities for sustainable development management: note by the Secretariat
E/C.16/2014/3	3	Promoting leadership, innovation and risk management for sustainable development: note by the Secretariat
E/C.16/2014/4	3	Invigorating the professionalism and morale of the public service in Africa: note by the Secretariat
E/C.16/2014/5	4	Review of the United Nations Programme in Public Administration and Finance: report of the Secretariat
CEPA/CP/2014/13	3	Social and environmentally sustainable urbanization: guidelines for meaningful progress (conference room paper)

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